

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:MLDURKEE:MJK

APPROVED BY EUR/WE - MR. BARBOUR

S/S - MR. ORTIZ

EUR - MR. ETNG

NSC - TEXT RCV'D FROM WHITE HOUSE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INFO, SP, UK

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER WILSON

PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FORD
TO PRIME MINISTER WILSON IN RESPONSE TO THE PRIME
MINISTER'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 22.

BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

IT WAS VERY GOOD OF YOU TO PROVIDE ME WITH A FULLER
EXPRESSION OF YOUR THINKING ON SPAIN, IN YOUR MESSAGE
OF DECEMBER 22, 1975. YOUR ANALYSIS AND OURS
ARE VERY SIMILAR, ALTHOUGH WE DIFFER SOMEWHAT AS TO THE
POLICY CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN.

I AGREE THAT THE SITUATION IN SPAIN WILL REMAIN FLUID
FOR SOME TIME. THE KING HAS OUTLINED A GENERALLY
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PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM, HOWEVER, AND THE CABINET WILL

REQUIRE BOTH TIME AND DETERMINATION TO IMPLEMENT IT.
GIVEN THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE CONTENDING FORCES,
THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS WILL NEED TO COMBINE PROGRESS
WITH CONTINUITY. THE PACE THEY SET WILL NOT SATISFY ALL

OBSERVERS OR ALL SPANIARDS, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THEY
SHOULD NOT BE PRESSED TO MOVE MORE RAPIDLY THAN THE
POLITICAL PRESSURES PERMIT. WHENEVER POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD
ALL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS
NOW IN MOTION, AS YOU PROPOSE TO DO.

THE KING HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE WANTS TO
MOVE BUT IS OPPOSED BY HARD-LINE ELEMENTS. TO BE EFFECTIVE,
THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE USED
TO STRENGTHEN THE KING AND HIS CABINET.

FURTHER, WE SHOULD AVOID HAVING THE DEBATE ABOUT SPAIN'S
TIES WITH EUROPE FOCUS ON LIBERALIZATION AS A PRICE
SPAIN MUST PAY. EVEN MODERATE SPANIARDS ARE RESENTFUL
OF FOREIGN PRESSURES. IN MY OPINION, IT WILL BE MORE
EFFECTIVE TO EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS OF FULL PARTICIPATION
IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS -- THROUGH INDUCEMENTS SUCH AS
VISITS, HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENTS AND TRADE NEGOTIATIONS --
RATHER THAN TO THREATEN CONTINUED EXCLUSION FROM NATO
AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDS
TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS TO TAKE
WHATEVER STEPS THEY FIND POSSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
SPAIN'S EUROPEAN IDENTITY IS RECOGNIZED AND VALUED.
WE WANT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU ON THIS AND TO TAILOR
OUR EFFORTS TO POLITICAL REALITIES IN EUROPE. I
REALIZE THAT NOT ALL OF OUR PARTNERS SHARE OUR VIEW
THAT THEIR POSITIVE GESTURES NOW WILL BE MORE FRUITFUL
THAN HOLDING BACK UNTIL GREATER CHANGES ARE MADE.
TO ME, IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF PRESERVING THE OLD
REGIME BUT RATHER OF ENCOURAGING PROGRESS WITH
MINIMAL RISK OF PROVOKING RESISTANCE THAT MIGHT STOP
ALL CHANGE.

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ON A PURELY BILATERAL MATTER, I TRUST OUR NEW AGREEMENT
WITH SPAIN CAN BE CONCLUDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. QUITE
APART FROM THE OBVIOUS MILITARY ADVANTAGES FOR WESTERN
SECURITY, WE SEE THIS COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT AS VERY
USEFUL FOR THE BROAD CONTACTS IT GIVES US WITH LEADERS
IN VARIOUS FIELDS THROUGHOUT SPAIN.

I WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH AS THE SPANISH

SITUATION DEVELOPS, BOTH VIA THE SECRETARIES OF STATE
AND OUR OWN EXCHANGES. OUR DIFFERENCES SEEM TO BE
MATTERS OF EMPHASIS RATHER THAN OF APPROACH. YOUR
INTENTION TO GIVE THE KING THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT SEEMS
TO ME THE BEST GENERAL APPROACH. WE SHALL DO THE SAME IN
OUR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND SYMPATHY, VISITS, AND

STRENGTHENING OF CONTACTS.

SINCERELY: GERALD R. FORD. END OF TEXT.

SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL BE FORWARDED FOR LATER DELIVERY
TO THE PRIME MINISTER. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, TOSEC, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE016394
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MLDURKEE:MJK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760024-0979
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760131/aaaabaso.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER WILSON PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FORD
TAGS: PFOR, SP, UK, US, (FORD, GERALD R), (WILSON, HAROLD)
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006